



CONTENT MARKETING WORKBOOK

A Beginner's Guide to Applying
Content Marketing to **Your Business**

Second Edition



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction: Your Content Marketing Transformation | 3 |
| Section 1: Building a Content Creation Framework | 4 |
| Section 2: The Power of Storytelling..... | 6 |
| Section 3: Generating Content Ideas..... | 8 |
| Section 4: Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy | 10 |
| Section 5: Becoming an Effective Writer..... | 13 |
| Section 6: Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing | 15 |
| Section 7: How to Effectively Promote Content..... | 18 |
| Section 8: Measuring and Analyzing Your Content..... | 21 |
| Section 9: Developing a Growth Marketing Mentality..... | 23 |
| Section 10: Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages | 25 |
| The Results: Your Completed Workbook..... | 28 |





Your Content Marketing Transformation

Welcome to the Content Marketing Workbook! You're here because you want to apply content marketing concepts to your business, turning yourself into a lean, mean content-marketing machine.

To start, what is content marketing?

Content marketing is a strategic marketing and business process focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content. This content is meant to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, drive profitable customer action.

When done correctly, content marketing helps create a relationship with your audience, which leads to trust. And if your audience trusts you, they'll be more willing to do business with you when they're ready to make a purchasing decision.

Your content should attract the right people to your site, convert those people into leads, and nurture and help close them into customers. But it doesn't stop there — your content should always delight your customers, turning them into promoters of your brand.

In a nutshell, content marketing is really just the art of communicating with your prospects and customers without having to sell to them.

What You'll Learn in This Workbook

The activities and readings in this workbook will help you fine-tune and grow your content marketing capabilities. Each section is based on learnings from each class in [HubSpot's free Content Marketing Certification course](#). This way, you can apply what you learned to your business. If you need help, refer to the helpful links below each activity.

Lastly, tweet me ([@JustinRChampion](#)) and HubSpot Academy ([@HubSpotAcademy](#)) as you work through your content marketing transformation. We're here to support you, and we want to follow your journey.

****Please save this workbook to the desktop on your computer. This way your progress will be saved correctly as you complete each section.****

Time to get after it!



1

Section 1

Building a Content Creation Framework

Why does your business need a framework for creating content?

Successful content marketing strategies require publishing a lot of content for each buyer persona at different stages of the buyer's journey. When you're looking to create content on a large scale, you shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel with each piece. Instead, you should have a clear and repeatable process in place that allows you to produce blog posts, ebooks, webinars, and more in an efficient manner.

Let's put this framework into practice.



Reading

What does an editorial calendar look like? Learn more by reading [How to Create an Editorial Calendar Using Google Calendar](#).



Activity 1

An editorial calendar is the first step toward achieving a sustainable content creation process. Use this [free template](#) to create an editorial content calendar for your business.



Activity 2

Just because you've created a piece of content, doesn't mean it's ready to be shared with the world. Content needs a review system that double-checks if the content has been edited, if SEO best practices have been implemented, and if it matches your brand's style guide.

A content review process should include the following:

- Defined content creation and approval roles to create accountability and ensure alignment of responsibilities (content creators, content reviewers and editors, etc.).
- A defined content creation and approval process before publishing content (rounds of approval with specific details for each round).
- A document that tracks the content creation and approval process based on deadlines (helps organize content creation efforts, which helps keep content production consistent and on time).



Outline a content review process for your business. Doing so will help ensure your business is proud to put its name on each piece of content it publishes.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 3:24 timestamp](#) in the “Building a Content Creation Framework” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



2

Section 2

The Power of Storytelling

Why does your business need to tell a story?

Everyone loves a great story. People want to feel connected to a group, to belong, and stories create this connection. Stories give us a reason to communicate and relate; stories are stimulating and give us something to believe in; stories make us feel better, smarter, safer, or even loved.

Business storytelling is similar. It's about creating alignment between your business and your prospects and customers.

Let's put storytelling into practice.



Reading

What makes employees and customers buy into a company? Learn more by reading the [Executive Summary: The Golden Circle With Simon Sinek](#).



Activity 1

Simon Sinek says, "People don't buy what you do, they buy WHY you do it."

Why does your company do what it does? In the box below, write your business' WHY:

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 0:14 timestamp](#) in "The Power of Storytelling" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





Activity 2

Regardless of the story you're trying to tell or how you're trying to tell it, storytelling has three essential elements — characters, conflict, and resolution.

In the box below, outline your business' character (the primary person you're trying to reach and educate or inform):

In the box below, outline your business' conflict (the problem it's trying to solve):

In the box below, outline your business' resolution (the solution it offers):

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 2:30 timestamp](#) in "The Power of Storytelling" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



3

Section 3

Generating Content Ideas

Why do you need a process for generating content ideas?

A content generation process will allow you to come up with a predictable flow of original, high-quality, and relevant content ideas.

There are four things you should keep in mind when generating content ideas on your own:

1. What are your buyer personas' reading habits?
2. What are your competitors doing?
3. What are people talking about on question and answer sites like Quora?
4. What can you learn from your search engine optimization efforts?

Let's put idea generation into practice.



Activity 1

Keeping the above in mind, make a list of five ideas for your next content piece — in any format (blog post, guide, ebook, infographic, etc.). Each idea should be educational or informative about your industry, not your brand. Most people don't know who you are yet, so you need to attract them with valuable thought-leadership content.

Content Idea 1:

Content Idea 2:



Content Idea 3:

Content Idea 4:

Content Idea 5:

If you get stuck: please refer to [video three](#) in “Generating Content Ideas” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



4

Section 4

Planning a Long-term Content Strategy

Why is long-term content planning important for your business?

When it comes to creating content, you want to remain as reactive and agile as you can to make the most of your time. Having a plan will give you and your team the ability to remain reactive to upcoming initiatives, stay organized, and proactively manage content required for your marketing tasks.

Let's put long-term content strategy into practice.



Activity 1

Perform a content audit and an event-based audit for your business using [this template](#).

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 2:56 timestamp](#) in the "Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



Reading

What does a detailed buyer persona look like? Learn more by reading [The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas](#).



Activity 2

Your content marketing efforts should always be targeted to at least one of your business' buyer personas. Based on the above reading, list your primary buyer persona's traits in the boxes below.

1. What's your primary buyer persona's background? (Job? Career path? Family?)



2. What are your primary buyer persona's demographic traits? (Male or female? Age? Income? Location?)

3. What are your primary buyer persona's identifiers? (Demeanor? Communication preferences?)

4. What are your primary buyer persona's goals? (Primary goal? Secondary goal?)

5. What are your primary buyer persona's challenges? (Primary challenge? Secondary challenge?)

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 8:17 timestamp](#) in the "Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





Activity 3

Identify the buyer's journey for your primary buyer persona. The goal is to help them through the awareness, consideration, and decision stages. And while there's no magic number for the amount of content within the buyer's journey, let's start off with identifying three pieces of content — one for each stage of the buyer's journey.

We recommend starting with a comprehensive, educational awareness-stage resource like a guide or ebook. This way, you can prove your value and help your primary buyer persona regarding your industry, which is a great way to start building a relationship.

1. Awareness-stage resource format (e.g. ebook, guide): _____

Awareness-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

2. Consideration-stage resource format (e.g. checklist, case study): _____

Consideration-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

3. Decision-stage resource format (e.g. consultation, demo): _____

Decision-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 9:00 timestamp](#) in the "Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



5

Section 5

Becoming An Effective Writer

Why does effective writing matter so much?

At its core, effective content is relevant and useful to your audience, your reader. It makes your reader — not your company and its revenue targets or goals — your number one priority. Your writing should use your audience’s language and show that you understand their pain points, challenges, and goals. It should be produced to help people, not just sell them on your products or services.

Let’s put effective writing into practice.



Activity 1

For almost every piece of content you create, coming up with 5-10 different headlines is a great writing exercise.

In the box below, write 5-10 different headlines for your business’ next blog post.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 0:12 timestamp](#) in the “Becoming an Effective Writer” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





Activity 2

Content can always use another set of editing eyes to make sure it's grammatically correct and consistent with your brand style guide, among other things.

Select one of your blog posts and review it with a fresh perspective. Make sure your content follows common grammar and style best practices, such as:

- Use contractions
- Write with simple language
- Use the active voice
- Be clear and concise
- Use short sentences and paragraphs
- Cut fluffy words from your writing
- Adhere to a style guide
- Use "you" and "your"
- Avoid jargon
- Use the appropriate voice and tone

Did you find any grammatical or style mistakes? If so, what are they, and how will you fix them?

If you get stuck: please refer to [video three at the 1:15 timestamp](#) in the "Becoming an Effective Writer" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



6

Section 6

Extending The Value of Your Content Through Repurposing

Why is repurposing content important?

Great content is the foundation of your content marketing plan. It attracts new visitors to your site, strengthens your online reputation, and builds trust, which ultimately leads to converting prospects into leads and eventually customers. However, it can take a lot of time and effort to create effective content on a consistent basis.

Repurposing content allows you to extend its value by changing it to serve a different purpose, like transforming the messaging of a blog post into a video. The messaging is the same, but the channel or format in which it's consumed is different.



Activity 1

Instead of creating long-form content like a guide or an ebook from scratch, identify its concepts and contents first. This way, you can create smaller pieces of content in the short term (like a blog post series) that grow into your long-form content resource.

Identify the topic and format for a long-form piece of content. Consider using the awareness-stage guide or ebook you identified in the “Planning a Long-Term Content Strategy” section.

Awareness-stage resource format (e.g. ebook, guide): _____

Awareness-stage topic (think of this like a working title — what do you want to communicate?):

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 8:30 timestamp](#) in the “Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





Activity 2

Identify five supporting short-form subtopics for your content offer. Each supporting subtopic should be strong enough to be a stand-alone piece, but when combined with other supporting subtopics should help build your long-form content resource.

Supporting subtopic 1: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 2: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 3: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

Supporting subtopic 4: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.



Supporting subtopic 5: _____

Provide a brief explanation of this supporting subtopic.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 8:58 timestamp](#) in the “Extending the Value of Your Content Through Repurposing” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



Activity 3

Format each supporting short-form subtopic into a blog post for your business’ blog. Use the editorial content calendar you created in the “Building a Content Creation Framework” section, and schedule each blog post based on your team’s content production cadence.



7

Section 7

How to Effectively Promote Content

Why is it important to know how to promote your content effectively?

No matter how you came across that latest piece of content online, it was likely an example of content promotion. What is content promotion? Well, it's the distribution of content through a variety of marketing channels. These channels include social media networks, blog posts, email, and live events, just to name a few.

As a content marketer, it's important to understand how to leverage these promotion channels to connect with new audiences and prospects in the right place at the right time.

Let's put content promotion into practice.



Activity 1

Each marketing channel provides a different user experience. Simply copying and pasting the same message across all your marketing channels may save you time, but it doesn't provide the best experience for your audience. Furthermore, you're missing an opportunity to optimize messaging based on the specific marketing channel.

Select a recent blog post your business published and write a unique promotional message for at least three of your marketing channels, like Facebook, Twitter, or email.

Remember, each channel offers a different user experience. The goal is to tailor the message to the user experience on that channel.

Blog post title: _____

Channel: _____

Message:



Channel: _____

Message:

Channel: _____

Message:

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 7:07 timestamp](#) in the “How to Effectively Promote Content” class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



Activity 2

You spend a lot of time creating content to only share it on social media once. You can easily share the same piece of content multiple times without deterring folks by refreshing the social post’s messaging.

Using the same blog post from ACTIVITY 1, compose five different social media posts for one channel using interesting snippets from the content to serve as the post’s five varying messages.

Blog post title: _____

Channel: _____

Message 1:



Message 2:

Message 3:

Message 4:

Message 5:



8

Section 8

Measuring and Analyzing Your Content

Why should you measure and analyze your content?

Without a close look into the performance of your social media messaging, your content offers, or your advertising, you have no evidence that the great content you've invested so much time producing is actually working.

Think about the potential money and time you and your team could be wasting on channels that don't drive you toward meeting your goals. Analyzing your content helps close the loop on your day-to-day marketing efforts.

Let's put this measurement and analysis into practice.



Reading

How do you track and prove the value of your content marketing efforts? Learn more by reading [A Free, Customizable Template to Help You Prove Marketing ROI \[+ SlideShare\]](#).



Activity 1

It's always helpful to set a SMART goal to align with your business' performance metrics. What makes a goal SMART? It's:

- Specific — Your goal should be unambiguous and communicate what is expected, why it's important, who's involved, where it's going to happen, and which constraints are in place.
- Measurable — Your goal should have concrete criteria for measuring progress and reaching the goal.
- Attainable — Your goal should be realistic and possible for your team to reach.
- Relevant — Your goal should matter to your business and address a core initiative.
- Timely — You should have an expected date that you will reach the goal.



Work with your team to identify a SMART goal for your content that aligns with one of your business' key performance metrics.

Metrics to consider include: brand awareness, engagement, lead generation, customer conversion and sales, customer loyalty and retention, and website performance.

Write your SMART goal in the box below.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 3:09 timestamp](#) in the "Measuring and Analyzing Your Content" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



Activity 2

It's important to properly track the performance of your SMART goals and keep key stakeholders in the loop.

List the name and position of key stakeholders who should stay informed of progress of the SMART goal identified in ACTIVITY 1.

Not every stakeholder is created equal. Some prefer granular details while others want high-level progress updates.

List the communication cadence for each key stakeholder as well as their preferred format of communication (i.e. detailed report vs. short email).

If you get stuck: please refer to [video three at the 0:53 timestamp](#) in the "Measuring and Analyzing Your Content" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



9

Section 9

Developing a Growth Marketing Mentality

Why is growth marketing important to expanding your business?

The goal of a growth marketer is to identify new opportunities that will help build and engage your organization's audience.

This approach is important for content marketers, as it can help them find new ways to communicate with their audience, whether it be a new marketing channel or a piece of content to test.

Let's put growth marketing into practice.



Activity 1

Before running your next marketing test, you first need to identify your business' marketing channels. This way you can organize your initiatives based on importance by channel.

Organize your marketing channels by filling in the bullseye framework fields below.

1. Identify your business's inner ring — These are your three top-performing marketing channels that account for the majority of your business revenue (Facebook, blog, AdWords, etc.).

2. Identify your business's middle ring — These are your six secondary marketing channels that help drive business revenue, but are not as effective as the inner-ring marketing channels.



3. Identify your business's outer ring — These are your marketing channels that are the least helpful with driving business revenue. This ring includes marketing channels you're currently active on as well as marketing channels you've yet to become a member of. That being said, it's important to identify as many relevant marketing channels as possible for your business.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 3:12 timestamp](#) in the "Developing a Growth Marketing Mentality" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.



10

Section 10

Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages

Why are topic clusters important?

Content marketers are constantly battling for the attention of their audience. If you want to create effective content that converts visitors into leads and eventually customers, you need to create a helpful, positive user experience that solves for both the searcher and the search engine, not just one or the other.

Here's how your content can solve for both: Create targeted clusters of relevant content that each cover a specific core topic in depth. These targeted clusters then need to lead to a centralized hub, known as a content pillar.

What is a content pillar? A content pillar (aka pillar page) is a website page that covers a broad topic in depth and is linked to from a cluster of related content.

Let's put creating topic clusters into practice.



Activity 1

Select a guide or ebook that you've created, and deconstruct it into an ungated, conversion-focused 10x content pillar page.

Make sure the guide is awareness- or consideration-stage focused and supports at least one or more of your products and services.

Below is a list of the 10x content pillar page layout tips to consider.



1. Core topic referenced in page title

2. Core topic referenced in URL

3. Core topic referenced in H1 tag

4. Conversion-focused landing page elements

5. Anchor-linked table of contents

6. Top navigation

7. Definition of core topic

8. Images with core topic referenced in alt text

9. H2 tags for section headers

10. Links to relevant internal resources

11. Links to relevant external resources

12. Use related terms throughout the page's content

13. Back to top button

Terminology
Feedback text analysis is a new industry and that's why there isn't a well-established terminology (that everybody agrees upon).

| CHECKOUTS | DEPARTMENTS | FACILITIES | MARKETING | PRODUCTS | STAFF |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Avg. NPScore 14.78 | Avg. NPScore 10.41 | Avg. NPScore 14.89 | Avg. NPScore 38.89 | Avg. NPScore 39.45 | Avg. NPScore 53.92 |
| Avg. Sentiment 0.9086 | Avg. Sentiment 0.6293 | Avg. Sentiment 0.1719 | Avg. Sentiment 0.3802 | Avg. Sentiment 0.4168 | Avg. Sentiment 0.5818 |

STEP 2: Decide how to categorize customer comments (Signals)

You cannot analyze customer feedback without categorizing it. This categorization has to be done systematically, relevantly and consistently. Your categorization **system (Codeframe)** needs to be **uniform** across the organization otherwise the text analysis results cannot be used in top management reporting.

Signal categorization turns open-text into statistical information, which enables you to

- Detect patterns (trends, weak signals);
- Benchmark organizational units; and
- Distribute the customer comments in real-time based on customer experience stakeholder roles.

Twelve criteria for choosing a verbatim analytics provider

But choosing the right text analysis solution is easier said than done. It is hard to justify the investment with a meaningful ROI calculation (what is the value of better information?), and choosing the right solution among the many text analysis methods and approaches can seem like a daunting task.

In his excellent blog post "12 Criteria for Choosing a Text/Social Analytics Provider", Seth Grimes tries to make the vendor selection process easier by creating a common-sense list of requirements and checkpoints. Because Seth's list covers the requirements for all kinds of text analysis, I will try to paraphrase it from the point-of-view of open-ended customer and employee comment analysis (verbatim analysis).

His advice to keep a clear head and set realistic expectations is great.

"Some preliminary advice: Work back from your business goals. Determine what sorts of indicators, insights, and guidance you'll need. No business is going to need 98.7% sentiment analysis accuracy in 48 languages across a dozen different business domains. Be reasonable: stay away from over-detailed requirements checklists that rate options based on capabilities you'll never use. Create search criteria that separate the essentials from the nice-to-haves and leave off the don't-needs. Then design an evaluation that suits your situation - include proof-of-concept prototyping, if possible - to confirm whether each short-list option can transform data relevant to your business into the outputs you need, with the performance characteristics and at a cost you expect."

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two](#) at the 17:38 timestamp in "Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





Activity 2

Create a topic cluster by inserting a link in all like-themed content that points to your pillar page. Doing so will help solve for both the searcher and the search engine. It will solve for the searcher as you'll be connecting them with the most relevant resource possible on a specific topic. It will solve for the search engine as the search engine web crawler will be able to travel through linked content and identify the topic cluster.

If you get stuck: please refer to [video two at the 15:54 timestamp](#) in "Creating Topic Clusters and Pillar Pages" class in the Content Marketing Certification to learn more.





The Results

Your Completed Workbook!

Congratulations! By completing the activities and readings in this workbook, you've taken the first step toward transforming yourself into an efficient content marketer. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Hopefully this workbook helped you gain valuable knowledge and create tangible resources that will help kick start your business into a content marketing machine. **If you want to learn how to bring your content strategy to life using HubSpot's marketing tools, check out this step-by-step guide:** bit.ly/2xQr8v5.

The next step is to continue to build your plan and stay consistent in your approach. Always be on the lookout for new content opportunities that provide value to your audience. Remember, they're the reason you're doing this in the first place — if you want to start a relationship with them, give them the care and attention they deserve.

One last thing: Let's transform the way the world does business, together. Remember to tweet me ([@JustinRChampion](https://twitter.com/JustinRChampion)) and HubSpot Academy ([@HubSpotAcademy](https://twitter.com/HubSpotAcademy)) — we'd love to hear from you and see what you've achieved with this workbook. Plus, we're always looking for best-in-class work to showcase in HubSpot Academy training materials.

Always be learning,

Justin Champion | HubSpot Academy

